

What is claimed is:

1 Jul 1. A method of processing an electronic document corresponding to a hardcopy of the
2 2017 document, comprising the steps of:

3 placing a mark on the hardcopy, the mark containing identification information of
4 the electronic document;

5 viewing the hardcopy by an image capture device to capture an image of the
6 hardcopy document;

7 decoding the mark from the image captured by the image capture device to
8 determine identification information of the electronic document; and

9 processing the electronic document according to the identification information.

1 2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of viewing the hardcopy is
2 performed by moving a copy of the hardcopy in front of the image capture device.

1 3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of placing a mark on the
2 500 C17 hardcopy is performed by creating the mark at the time of creation of the electronic
3 document and wherein the hardcopy, with the mark, is printed from the electronic
4 document.

1 4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of placing a mark is performed
2 500 C17 by a printer that prints the digital mark on the hardcopy document.

1 5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of placing a mark is performed
2 500 C17 by a copying the hardcopy having a mark to create another hardcopy with the mark.

1 6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the mark is a bar code.

1 7. The method according to claim 6, wherein the mark is a two dimensional bar code.

1 8. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of processing the document
2 includes retrieving the document for viewing.

1 9. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of processing the document
2 includes the step of mailing the document by electronic mail.

1 10. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of processing the document
2 includes the step of the printing the document.

1 11. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of processing the document
2 includes the step of making a copy of the electronic document.

1 12. The method according to claim 1, wherein the mark is machine readable code
2 formed on a substrate on which the hardcopy is printed.

1 13. The method according to claim 12, wherein the machine readable code is formed
2 using font pattern modification including one of a half-tone screen, inter-character spacing
3 modification, and dithering patterns.

1 14. The method according to claim 12, wherein the machine readable code is formed on
2 a particular location in the hardcopy document.

1 15. The method according to claim 1, wherein the mark is a digital mark.

1 16. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of placing a mark is performed
2 by a printing press that prints the mark during bulk printing.

1 17. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of processing the electronic
2 document includes invoking a software application to process the electronic document.

1 18. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of processing the electronic
2 document includes identifying and processing based on any intellectual property rights
3 associated with the hardcopy documents.

1 19. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of processing the electronic
2 document includes calculating and allocating revenues or costs associated with the hardcopy
3 document.

Sub 20. A system for processing an electronic document corresponding to a hardcopy of the
2 electronic document, the system comprising:

3 a data storage device that stores the electronic document;

4 a mark encoder that encodes a mark on the hardcopy;

5 an image capture device that captures an image of the hardcopy including the mark;
6 a decoder, operatively connected to the image capture device, for decoding
7 document identification information from the mark from the image captured by the image
8 capture device; and
9 a processing unit, connected to the decoder and the data storage device, that
10 processes the electronic document in accordance with the decoded document identification
11 information.

1 21. The system according to claim 20, wherein the processing unit processes the
2 electronic document by one of sending by electronic mail, printing, or copying of the
3 electronic document.

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